

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 156
By: Shapiro
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, Texas has no Nurse-Family Partnership program. Nurse-Family Partnership programs, however, have existed for 23 years in 22 states, serving over 20,000 mothers. These programs focus on improved pregnancy outcomes, child health and development, and the economic self sufficiency of the family. Results from other states show that both children and their mothers benefit from these programs. For example, statistics have shown a 48 percent reduction in child abuse and neglect, 59 percent reduction in arrests, and a 90 percent reduction in adjudications. Benefits to mothers include 61 percent fewer arrests, 72 percent fewer convictions, and 98 percent fewer days spent in jail. For every one dollar spent by the state on these programs, long-term savings of between four and five dollars have been shown.

S.B. 156 implements the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, a nurse home visitation program, in 11 new sites across Texas. The program is an evidence-based nurse home visitation program designed to improve the health and well-being of low income first-time parents and their children. The program will include regular home visits by qualified nurses to participant mothers from pregnancy to age two and requires eligible participant mothers to enter the program not later than the 28th week of pregnancy. This bill authorizes a public or private entity, including a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of Texas, to apply to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) for a grant under this subchapter. Sites will be chosen based on the number of low income, first time mothers residing in the community, and a demonstrated need for a partnership program. Grant recipients will be required to participate in ongoing monitoring and performance evaluations and in community development support for the program. Such funds will be used for administrative costs, salaries, training, and facilities. S.B. 156 requires HHSC to work with the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office to adopt standards for the program and performance measurement indicators for the evaluation of each site.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

In the opinion of this committee, the bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Subchapter M, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER M. NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

S.B. 156 defines "competitive grant program" and "partnership program."

S.B. 156 requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a nurse-family partnership competitive grant program (program) through which the commission will award grants for the implementation of nurse-family partnership programs or the expansion of existing programs, and for their operation for a period not less than two years. HHSC is further required to award grants to applicants in a manner that ensures that programs collectively operate in multiple communities geographically distributed throughout the state and serves approximately 2,000 families.

S.B. 156 states that a program funded by a grant awarded under this subchapter must strictly adhere to the program model developed by the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office (national office), including any clinical, programmatic, and data collection requirements of that model, and it also requires registered nurses to make regular visits to the homes of low-income, first-time mothers participating in the program. These visits are designed to achieve certain specified goals. Nurses who provide services through the program are required to receive specified training, provide mothers with certain information, and provide specified assistance to mothers and the alleged fathers of their children. The regular visits by the nurse are required to begin no later than a mother's 28th week of gestation and end when her child reaches two years of age.

Sec. 531.454. APPLICATION. Specifies the entities that may apply for a grant under this subchapter, the manner in which the application is required to be made, and the content requirements of said application.

Sec. 531.455. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AWARDING GRANTS. Requires HHSC to consider certain additional factors in awarding grants under this subchapter.

Sec. 531.456. PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM STANDARDS. Requires the executive commissioner of HHSC (executive commissioner) with the assistance of the national office to adopt standards for partnership programs funded under this subchapter. Requires that standards must adhere to certain national office program model standards and guidelines.

Sec. 531.457. USE OF AWARDED GRANT FUNDS. Authorizes the grant funds awarded under this subchapter to be used only to cover costs for certain purposes relating to implementing or expanding and operating a program.

Sec. 531.458. STATE NURSE CONSULTANT. Authorizes HHSC, using appropriated program money, to contract with a state nurse consultant to assist grant recipients with implementing or expanding and operating a program in applicable communities.

Sec. 531.459. PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION; ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS. Requires HHSC with the assistance of the national office to adopt and use performance indicators to evaluate a grant recipient's performance in meeting the program standards adopted by HHSC under this section. Requires HHSC and the national office to prepare and submit to certain entities an annual report by December 1 of each year regarding the performance of each grant recipient in providing partnership programs. Sets forth the content requirements of the report. Requires each grant recipient on request to timely collect and provide data and any other information required by HHSC to monitor and evaluate the recipient or to prepare the report.

Sec. 531.460. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING. Requires HHSC to actively seek and apply for any available federal funds to assist in financing the competitive grant program established under this subchapter. Authorizes HHSC to use appropriated funds and to accept gifts, donations, and grants of money from the federal government, from local governments, private corporations, or other persons to assist in financing the competitive grant program.

SECTION 2. Requires HHSC to apply for federal funds to assist in financing the competitive grant program as soon as practicable. Requires HHSC to establish and implement the program not later than December 1, 2007. Requires HHSC to submit the initial annual report, as required by Section 531.459(a)(3), Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than December 1, 2008.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007